

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

A Protective Sign: The First Geneva Convention

Standard: V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
IX. Global Connections

Grade Level: 9–12

Objectives: The student will:

- Determine the origin of the International Red Cross
- Assess the Red Cross Convention as the First Geneva Convention
- Comprehend the background of the Geneva Convention(s)

Time: 1 class period

Materials: Documents: **1864** *The Red Cross Convention*

Resources: *Signs of Protection*

Exercises: *A Protective Sign*

Procedures:

1. Show students the three signs: Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Red Crystal. Ask them to identify each sign by name and explain what they know about the symbols.
 - a. The *Red Cross* was adopted by the International Red Cross in 1863;
 - b. The *Red Crescent* was formally recognized in 1929 as an additional official protection symbol for non-Christian countries;
 - c. The *Red Crystal* was adopted as an additional symbol with equal status to the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2005.
2. Distribute copies of the document, *The Red Cross Convention, 1864*. Explain to students that this is the first of four Geneva Conventions. Ask if anyone has heard about the Geneva Convention (even though there are *four* Geneva Conventions and additional protocols, the agreements are now referred to jointly as one) and in what context? Explain that the term, “convention,” is used in diplomacy to mean an international agreement, or treaty.
3. Discuss the responses of students and then provide the exercise, *A Protective Sign: The Red Cross and the First Geneva Convention*. Have students read the document and complete the exercise.

- 4.** Have students share their answers. Discuss the importance of “neutrality” as adopted in the Geneva Convention.
- 5.** Provide or share information about the intertwining of the Red Cross and the Geneva Convention(s). Stress that the founding of the American Red Cross came AFTER the International Red Cross.

Sources for additional reading:

a. Geneva Conventions:

<http://www.redcross.org/museum/history/geneva.asp> (Geneva Conventions)

b. American Red Cross:

<http://www.redcross.org/museum/history/brief.asp>

c. Four Conventions and Protocols—Complete content of each convention and Protocol:

http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/International%20Services/file_cont5230_lang0_1902.pdf